

**St. Paul's United Church of Christ
Zion United Church of Christ**

301 West Penn Avenue, Robesonia, PA 19551
St. Paul's UCC: 610-621-5770 -- office@sprucc.org -- www.sprucc.org
Zion UCC: 610-659-2775 -- mestme@aol.com -- www.1Zion.org

*No matter who you are,
or where you are on life's journey,
you're welcome here.*



**Friday, December 24, 2021
Christmas Eve**

5:00pm & 8:00pm

In-Person & Streaming Online

Welcome

*May God's loving presence be very real to you,
and may you receive strength and guidance today
That will enable you to handle life's challenges.*

Children's Bulletins

Crayons and activity bulletins are available in the narthex.

The activities match today's Bible readings and are designed for 3-6 & 7-12 year olds.

Biblias en Español

Biblias Bilingües en Español y Inglés están disponible en el vestíbulo narthex en la mesa de visitantes azul.

(Bilingual Bibles in Spanish & English are available in the narthex hallway on the blue visitors' table).

Nursery

Persons of all ages (including children) are very welcome to participate in the entire worship service. Due to the COVID pandemic, for the safety of children, we are currently not offering a nursery during worship. Normally, we have supervised nursery for 0-8 year olds, located on the first floor.

Junior Worship

For the safety of children, we are not offering Junior Worship during the pandemic. Normally, the option of "Junior Worship" is offered downstairs, on the 1st & 2nd Sunday of the month, following the children's sermon, for elementary age children to learn more about today's scripture lessons.

Restrooms

Restrooms are located both on the first and second floors to the left of the elevator.

Changing Tables

All four of our restrooms have changing tables. Each restroom has two "child care protection seats" to keep toddlers safe and secure while their parents use the restroom.

Water Fountains

For the safety of all, our water fountains are disabled during the pandemic.

Sunday School & Adult Faith Formation Classes

Classes for all ages are held at 9:00am.

Sunday Worship

Sunday Worship is held at 10:15am.

Prayer and Care

If you would like to add yourself or someone else to the prayer list, or request a pastoral call, please call or email the church office. You are welcome to take home with you a copy of *Our Daily Bread* daily devotional booklet, located on a table in the narthex hallway.

Looking for a Church to Call Home

If you are looking for a new church family home, we would be happy for you to consider St. Paul's or Zion United Church of Christ. For more information about St. Paul's, Zion, and the UCC, we invite you to talk with our pastors, an usher, a greeter, or any member of our churches.

More Information....

Additional literature about our missions, ministries, and fellowship opportunities is located on the **Blue Visitor Table** in the narthex hallway, or contact us using the contact information on the front page of this bulletin.

Please let us know if we can be in prayer with you or if there is any way in which we can help make your worship experience more meaningful.

*{Symbols used in this bulletin: * = if able please stand; ♪# = Red Hymnal Page; ♫# = Blue Hymnal Page}*



www.sprucc.org



Free WiFi

Virtual Worship Service

Online: **Live Stream** at sprucc.org - Live or Watch & Listen Later on [St. Paul's UCC YouTube Channel](#)
Facebook Live (St. Paul's) at <https://www.facebook.com/www.sprucc.org/> - Live or Watch & Listen Later
Facebook Live (Zion) at <https://www.facebook.com/pg/Zion-United-Church-of-Christ-Womelsdorf-733032070041250> -
Live or Watch & Listen Later
Phone Stream at 1-888-649-5770 - Live or Listen Later
Zoom: Meeting ID: 104 401 368; Passcode: 301301 (or call 1-301-715-8592) - Live Only

If you have any access problems, please let us know at 610-621-5770 or Office@sprucc.org

Keeping One Another Safer this Season

{The full description of our safety policies can be found on a table in the hallway and at sprucc.org}

Regardless of vaccination status:

Masks that cover nose, mouth, & chin **MUST be worn by ALL** (over the age of 2) in the building.
*(*Except by designated worship leadership while in their designated socially distant areas).*

, **Available seating is numbered:** Only one household unit per seating number.

*The ushers will seek to sit families in larger pew sections, and individuals/couples in smaller sections.
(If we exceed our seating capacity in the sanctuary, we will seat worshipers in the fellowship hall - one household unit per table).*

The **red ribbons** are placed to increase safety through social distancing.

Do NOT sit on the red ribbons or move the red ribbons.

We are doing **contact tracing** in order to inform attendees if we learn of a positive case.

If you have COVID symptoms or have had a close contact exposure in the past 14 days
(and have not had a negative test), we invite you to participate virtually, rather than in person.

ORDER FOR WORSHIP

We Gather

*We are coming together as a community of faith to worship our God,
and provide for one another our love, support, and care.*

A TIME OF GATHERING

RINGING OF THE BELL

PRELUDE

GREETING AND WELCOME

*{To center your hearts and minds,
you are invited to individually offer this prayer silently
during or before the Prelude}*

PRAYER BEFORE WORSHIP [®] *(Silently Before Worship Begins)*

All-powerful and unseen God, the coming of your light into our world has brightened weary hearts with peace. Call us out of darkness, and empower us to proclaim the birth of your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

{Those who are able, please rise}

***PROCESSIONAL HYMN**

"O Come, All Ye Faithful"

♫ Blue # 249

Vs1 **O come, all ye faithful, joyful and triumphant,
O come ye, O come ye, to Bethlehem.
Come and behold him, born the King of angels;**

Refrain

**O come, let us adore him, O come let us adore him,
O come, let us adore him, Christ the Lord.**

Vs3 **Sing, choirs of angels, sing in exultation;
O sing, all ye citizens of heaven above!
Glory to God, all glory in the highest;**

Refrain

*Composed: John F. Wade, trans. by Frederick Oakeley;
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***INVOCATION**

Leader: In the name of God the Father, and of God the Son, and of God the Holy Spirit.

ALL: Amen.

***CALL TO WORSHIP**

Leader: Angels from the realms of glory,
proclaimed the Messiah's birth

**People: Let all creation join in praising,
with our voices evermore raising**

***SUNG CALL TO WORSHIP** "Angels From the Realms of Glory"

♪ Red #105

**Come and worship, come and worship,
Worship Christ, the new born King.**

*Words: James Montgomery; Music: Henry T. Smart
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We Repent

*This is a time to confess our wrongdoings and neglects, ask for
God's mercy, admit our need for God's forgiving grace,
hear the assurance of our forgiveness,
and then give God our thanks and praise.*

***CALL TO CONFESSION** ² (Leader)

God comes to judge the world with righteousness and equity. The light God brings reveals the shadows in which we live. Before the purity of the word made flesh, our sins are exposed. We want to be rid of them. Let us pray for forgiveness....

***CONFESSION OF SIN** ² (Unison)

God of the commonplace, we confess that we have been impressed by power and authority. We do not expect to meet you in the poor of the land, in cold barns, or on lonely duty watches. We are slow to hear the angels or to embrace the "good news of great joy." We hesitate to leave our chosen tasks to share in your larger purposes. We pursue dubious pleasures that tear down and destroy the best we know. We worship the gods of technology, consuming far more than our share of the world's resources. Our individualism flies in the face of long-term commitments and genuine community. Forgive our lack of faith. Renew us in the Holy Spirit and send us out to share your Good News, we pray. Amen.

***SILENT PRAYERS OF CONFESSION**

{A time to silently offer our personal prayers of confession}

***PRAYER FOR MERCY**

"Kyrie"

♪ Red #518

Leader (*spoken*): Lord, have mercy upon us.

People (*sung*): Lord, have mercy upon us.

Leader (*spoken*): Christ, have mercy upon us.

People (*sung*): Christ, have mercy upon us.

Leader (*spoken*): Lord have mercy upon us.

People (*sung*): Lord, have mercy upon us.

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***ASSURANCE OF PARDON** [®] *(Leader)*

The grace of God has appeared for the salvation of all. Do not be afraid. This is a day for good news of great joy. The Savior is born anew in our midst. Glory to God in the highest! Praise God for all we have heard and seen, as it has been told to us. **Amen.**

***CALL TO PRAISE**

Leader: We have heard angels from on high sweetly singing over the plains

People: We join the mountains in reply, echoing their joyous strains

***SUNG RESPONSE OF PRAISE** *“Angels We Have Heard on High”*

♪ Red # 105

Glo - - - - ria, in excelsis Deo!

Glo - - - - ria, in excelsis Deo!

*Music by Edward Shippen Barnes
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{Please be seated}

Lighting of the Advent Wreath - Light ^①

INTRODUCTORY SENTENCES: *(Leader)*

On this Christmas Eve we are gathered as God’s people to celebrate again what Christ’s coming means to the world. We join with Christians all over the world who are celebrating tonight.

READING OF SCRIPTURE: *(Leader)*

For a child has been born for us, a son given to us; authority rests upon his shoulders; and he is named Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

(from Isaiah 9:6)

But the angel said to them, “Do not be afraid; for see—I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: “Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace among those whom he favors!”

(from Luke 2:10, 14)

and hope does not disappoint us, because God’s love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit that has been given to us.

(from Romans 5:5)

LIGHTING OF THE CANDLE: *(Leader)*

Tonight we relight the four Advent candles and recall that the good news means:

Hope *{a blue candle is lit}*

Peace *{a blue candle is lit}*

Joy *{a pink candle is lit}*

Love *{a blue candle is lit}*

Jesus Christ is the greatest gift who makes all these other gifts possible. So, we light the Christ candle now, as we think about what Christ’s coming means to each one of us.

{The Christ Candle of the wreath is lit}

PRAYER:

Leader: Let us pray...

ALL: We thank you, God, for your gift of Jesus Christ to the entire world. We thank you that Christ’s coming makes hope, peace, joy, and love possible for every person in every nation. Encourage us to do our part to bring good will and peace to our families, our churches, our neighborhoods, and the world. Now let your Spirit put us in touch with you, the living God, through the words and music we hear tonight. In the name of Jesus Christ we pray. Amen.

We Hear the Word of God

We seek to learn more about God's love and grace, and how we are to live our lives as disciples of Jesus Christ. The Bible is our primary text on faith, which we consider to be scripture - sacred writings.
We believe the Bible to be the "inspired word of God."
Gospel (which means "Good News") refers to Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, which are Christians' most central books of the Bible.

PROCLAMATION OF SCRIPTURE

Old Testament Prophecy: [Isaiah 9:2-7](#)
New Testament Letter: [Titus 2:11-14](#)

Leader: The word of the Lord.

People: Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL LESSON: [Luke 2:1-20](#)

(RSV - Reprinted in bulletin)

HYMN

"Angels We have Heard On High"

♩ Blue # 278

Angels we have heard on high, Sweetly singing o'er the plains
And the mountains in reply, Echo back their joyous strains

Glo-----ria in excelsis Deo,
Glo-----ria in excelsis Deo.

Shepherds , why this jubilee? Why your joyous strains porlong?
Say what may the tidings be Which inspire your heavenly song?

Glo-----ria in excelsis Deo,
Glo-----ria in excelsis Deo.

Come to Bethlehem and see Him whose birth the angels sing;
Come adore on bended knee Christ the Lord, the newborn King.

Glo-----ria in excelsis Deo,
Glo-----ria in excelsis Deo.

Traditional French Carol
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CHILDREN'S MESSAGE

SERMON

HYMN

"Go Tell it on the Mountain"

♩ Red # 258

Refrain:

Go, tell it on the mountain, Over the hills and every-where;
Go, tell it on the mountain, That Jesus Christ is born!

Vs1 While shepherds kept their watching
O'er silent flocks by night,
Beheld through-out the heavens
There shone a holy light.

Vs2 The shepherds feared and trembled
When lo! above the earth
Rang out the angel chorus
That hailed our Savior's birth.

Words adapt.: John W. Work, Jr.; Music adapt. & arr.: William Farley Smith;
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We Respond with Thanks

*We have heard God's call and have come and worshiped,
we have confessed our sins and been assured of our forgiveness, we have
learned more about God's grace and God's will. We now respond by
re-affirming our faith in God,
praying with and for one another, trusting in God's providence in our world,*

{Those who are able, please rise}

*AFFIRMATION OF FAITH (Unison) Apostles' Creed

**I believe in God, the Father Almighty,
Creator of heaven and earth.**

**And in Jesus Christ, his only begotten Son, our Lord,
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, dead, and buried;
he descended to the dead;
on the third day he rose again,
ascended into heaven,
and is seated on the right hand of God the Father Almighty.
He will come again to judge the living and the dead.**

**I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy catholic church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting. Amen.**

*The word "catholic" means "the universal church" and was the word used in the original version of the Creed. It does not refer here to the particular denomination of the Roman Catholic Church, but rather the whole Christian church of all denominations, the body of Christ, as a universal fellowship.

{please be seated}

OPPORTUNITIES OF OFFERING TIME AND TALENT

Prayer Needs, Joys, Opportunities for Study and Service, and other Announcements

OFFERTORY INVITATION ^②

Leader: We are people chosen for good deeds.

People: Together we can accomplish much as we bring our tithes and offerings to God.

Leader: Through our sharing, God brings a new day to many.

People: Let our offerings be an expression of thanksgiving for the incarnation, for the peace God gives, for the joy that is our today.

RETURNING GOD'S TITHES AND PRESENTING OUR OFFERINGS

Online Giving

*{As we share in hybrid worship, there is no passing of the plate in person.
A plate is placed in the rear of the sanctuary for offerings to be placed
when arriving or departing from the sanctuary.*

*Whether worshipping in person or online,
the safest way to offer your tithe and offering to God through his church
is through St. Paul's UCC secure [Online Giving](#) option on our website at [sprucc.org](#). [St. Paul's UCC Click Here](#)
or Zion UCC's online giving at [www.1Zion.org](#) - [Zion UCC Click Here](#)
Offerings may also be mailed to St. Paul's UCC; 301 West Penn Ave; Robesonia, PA 19551
or Zion UCC; PO Box 97; Womelsdorf, PA 19567}.*

OFFERTORY

{Those who are able, please rise}

***OFFERTORY RESPONSE** *“What Child is This”*

♫ Blue # 281

**So bring Him incense, gold, and myrrh,
Come peasant, king to own Him;
The King of kings salvation brings;
Let loving hearts enthrone Him.
This, this is Christ the King;
Whom shepherds guard and angels sing;
Haste, haste to bring Him laud,
The Babe, the Son of Mary!**

*Words: William C Dix
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***OFFERTORY PRAYER** [®] *(Leader)*

Thank you, God, for coming to us in a human life so expressive of love that two thousand years have not extinguished the flame. May that love burn so brightly in our lives that its fires will spread. Use our tithes and offerings to ignite in the world such caring and compassion that all your children may know joy and peace, in Jesus’ name. **Amen.**

Sacrament of Holy Communion [®]

The Sacrament of Holy Communion is the central act of Christian worship, bringing us more fully together with one another and the Triune God, through the sacrifice of the body and blood of Jesus Christ. (Matthew 26:20-30, Mark 14:17-26, Luke 22:14-23, John 13:21-30)

***INVITATION**

Leader: Dearly beloved in the Lord: Our blessed Saviour Jesus Christ instituted the Holy Communion of his Body and Blood, that it might be the abiding memorial of his atoning death; the seal of his perpetual presence in the Church through the Holy Spirit; the mystical representation of the sacrifice of himself on the cross; the pledge of his undying love for his people; and the bond of his living union and fellowship with them to the end of time.

ALL: **The celebration of the Lord’s Supper has ever been regarded by the Church as the innermost sanctuary of the whole Christian worship. What we do here is not merely with signs, but with the realities these signs represent. We seek to approach the Lord’s Table rightly, striving to be devout and repentant, with a believing mind.**

Leader: We cordially invite to partake of this Sacrament all who are truly grieved and penitent for their sins, who look to the Lord Jesus Christ for righteousness and salvation, who abide in the fellowship of his Church, and who desire to possess his Spirit and walk in his ways. To all such the compassionate Redeemer himself says: Come unto me, all you that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.

***COMMUNION PRAYER**

Leader: The Lord be with you.

People: And also with you.

Leader: Lift up your hearts.

People: We lift them to the Lord.

Leader: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

People: It is right to give our thanks and praise.

Leader:

It is very meet, right, and our bounden duty, that we should at all times and in all places give thanks to you, O Holy Lord, Father Almighty, Everlasting God, who created the heavens and the earth and all that is in them, who made humankind in your own image, and whose tender mercies are over all your works.

We bless you for the beauty and bounty of the earth and for the vision of the day when sharing by all will mean scarcity for none.

We remember the covenant you made with your people Israel, and we give you thanks for all our ancestors in faith. We rejoice that you call us to reconciliation with you and all people everywhere and that you remain faithful to your covenant even when we are faithless.

We rejoice that you call the entire human family to this table of sacrifice and victory. We come in remembrance and celebration of the gift of Jesus Christ, whom you sent, in the fullness of time, to be the good news. Born of Mary, our sister in faith, Christ lived among us to reveal the mystery of your Word, to suffer and die on the cross for us, to be raised from death on the third day, and then to live in glory.

We give thanks to you, gracious God, for the presence of your Holy Spirit in the church you have gathered. With your sons and daughters of faith in all places and times, we praise you with joy and sing....

***SANCTUS**

“Holy, Holy, Holy”

Seraphic Hymn

{Sanctus is Latin for “Holy.” Seraphic Hymn refers to the song of the Seraphim Angels. Sabaoth is a Hebrew name for God, referring to God as both creator and ruler of the world}.

**Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of Sabaoth;
Heaven and earth are full, are full of the majesty of thy glory,
Hosanna, hosanna, hosanna in the highest!
Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord,
Hosanna, hosanna, hosanna in the highest!**

Written by Alonzo P. Howard
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{Please be seated}

WORDS OF INSTITUTION

Leader:

Lord, we remember that on the night of betrayal and desertion, and on the eve of death, Jesus gathered the disciples for the feast of Passover. Jesus took bread, and after giving thanks to you, broke it, and gave it to the disciples, saying: “This is my body which is broken for you. Do this in remembrance of me.”

In the same way also the cup, after supper, saying: “This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.” For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord’s death until he comes again.

Leader: Therefore we proclaim the mystery of our faith.

**ALL: Christ has died,
Christ is risen,
Christ will come again.**

PRAYER OF CONSECRATION

Ordained Minister:

Eternal God, we unite in this covenant of faith, recalling Christ's suffering and death, rejoicing in Christ's resurrection, and awaiting Christ's return in victory. We offer you these gifts of the earth and of our labor. We present to you our very lives, committed to your service in behalf of all people.

Consecrate, therefore, by your Holy Spirit, these gifts of bread and fruit of the vine, bless these before us here in this place and bless those being shared in homes this night, and bless us all as we receive them. May we offer you our faith and praise, through the Holy Spirit may we be united in communion with Christ and with one another, no matter the physical distance, and may we continue faithful in all things.

ALL: Be present with us as we share this meal, and throughout all our lives, that we may know you as the Holy One, who with Christ and the Holy Spirit, lives for ever. Amen.

LAMB OF GOD

Leader: Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world:

People: have mercy on us.

Leader: Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world:

People: have mercy on us.

Leader: Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world:

People: grant us peace.

CALL TO THE SUPPER

Leader: The gifts of God for the people of God.
Come, for all things are ready.

BREAKING THE BREAD, RAISING THE CUP, AND SHARING THE ELEMENTS

*{For those who have the pre-filled cups:
open the first seal - unleavened bread wafer}*

Pastor: The Body of Christ broken for you. Take and eat.

People: Amen.

{You may eat the bread}

*{For those who have the pre-filled cups:
open the second seal - the fruit of the vine - grape juice}*

Pastor: The Blood of Christ shed for you. Take and drink.

People: Thanks be to God.

{You may drink the wine or grape juice}

{Those who are able, please rise}

*PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING

Leader: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

People: It is right to give our thanks and praise.

Leader: Bountiful God, we give you thanks that you have refreshed us at your table by granting us the presence of Christ. Strengthen our faith, increase our love for one another, and send us forth into the world in courage and peace, rejoicing in the power of the Holy Spirit.

ALL: Amen.

Candlelight Service ^①

PROCLAMATION OF SCRIPTURE

Gospel Lesson [John 1:1-14](#)

THE PROCLAMATION *(Leader)*

The God who said, "Let there be light," has caused light to shine in our hearts. That light is the glory of God reflected in the face of Jesus Christ. As our candles are a sea of light lit from the one light of Christ, so may the church reflect Christ's light and love in the world. Let us share the Light of Christ.

SHARING THE LIGHT OF CHRIST

*{We will receive the light from the Christ candle.
As the ushers bring the light to you, please pass the light to the person next to you.
Keep your lighted candle upright and
let the person with the unlighted candle tilt their candle to receive the light.
We will then stand and sing "Silent Night".}*

{For those who are able, please rise}

*HYMN *"Silent Night, Holy Night"*

Vs1 **Silent night! Holy night!
All is calm, All is bright
Round yon virgin mother and child!
Holy Infant, so tender and mild,
Sleep in heavenly peace,
Sleep in heavenly peace.**

Vs6 **Silent night! Holy night!
Son of God, love's pure light!
Radiant beams from Thy holy face
With the Dawn of redeeming grace,
Jesus, Lord, at Thy birth,
Jesus, Lord, at Thy birth.**

Vs2 **Silent Night! Holy night!
Shepherds quake at the sight!
Glories stream from heaven afar,
Heavenly hosts sing, "Alleluia!"
Christ, the Savior, is born,
Christ, the Savior, is born.**

*Words: Joseph Mohr; Trans by John F. Young; Music: Franz Gruber;
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*PASTORAL PRAYER

*LORD'S PRAYER *(Unison)*

**Our Father, who art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name.
Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread,
and forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors,
and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom and the power, and the glory forever.
Amen.**

We Are Sent Out

*In response to God's love and grace,
we go out into the world to share God's Good News
through our words and actions.*

*COMMISSION[®]

(based from Psalm 96 & Luke 2)

Leader: O sing to the LORD and bless his holy name.
Declare his glory and his marvelous works to all people.

People: **Let the heavens be glad, and let the earth rejoice.
For great is the LORD, and greatly to be praised.**

Leader: Ascribe to the LORD glory and strength.
Share the good news of great joy!

People: **We go from here to share with all God's good news of Jesus Christ.
We will share all that we have heard and seen through scripture,
as it has been revealed to us,
that all God's people might share in Christ's joy throughout the year.**

ALL: **Amen.**

*BENEDICTION

*THREE FOLD SUNG AMEN

♪ Red #558

*SENDING HYMN

"Joy To the World"

Vs1 **Joy to the world! the Lord is come;
Let earth receive her King;
Let every heart prepare Him room,
And heaven and nature sing,
And heav'n and nature sing,
And heav'n, and heav'n and nature sing.**

Vs3 **No more let sins and sorrows grow,
Nor thorns infest the ground;
He comes to make His blessings flow
Far as the curse is found,
Far as the curse is found,
Far as, far as the curse is found.**

Vs2 **Joy to the earth! the Savior reigns;
Let men their songs employ,
While fields and floods, rocks, hills, and
plains
Repeat the sounding joy,
Repeat the sounding joy,
Repeat, repeat the sounding joy.**

Vs4 **He rules the world with truth and grace,
And makes the nations prove
The glories of His righteousness,
And wonders of His love,
And wonders of His love,
And wonders, and wonders of His love.**

Words: Issac Watts; Music: Arr. from G.F. Handel by Lowell Mason;
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*{Acolyte carries the light back into the world, leading us,
as we now go to carry God's light and love back into the world.}*

POSTLUDE



DISMISSAL

*The ushers will dismiss the congregation pew by pew:
beginning with from the rear of the sanctuary and working forward,
dismissing from left to right, dismissing the Penn Ave side first, and the bell table side fourth.*





The Flow of the Worship Service

Our worship service has an intentional order to it. The flow of worship is called the liturgical movement. The movement reminds us weekly of our journey in faith of moving from being separated from God by sin, to being restored by God's grace as disciples of Christ. It is based on the sixth chapter of the Biblical book of Isaiah.

- (1) God welcomes us and invites us
- (2) We respond to God's call by worshiping Him
- (3) We confess our need for God's forgiveness and grace
- (4) We are assured of God's forgiveness and grace
- (5) We learn more about God's will through scripture, song, and sermon
- (6) We grow closer to God and one another through prayer
- (7) We give God thanks by offering our time, talent, and treasure
- (8) We experience greater oneness with God and each another through Communion
- (9) God sends us into the world to share His love and grace with others



Worship Service Resource Credits

Biblical quotations, unless otherwise noted, are from the New Revised Standard Version (NRSV) of the Bible (1989) by the Division of Christian Education of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the U.S.A.

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- ^② *Occasional Services; A Companion to the Lutheran Book of Worship*. Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress. (1982).
- ^③ *Gathered By Love* by Lavon Baylor. (1994). United Church Press; Cleveland, OH.
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Luke 2:1-20 RSV

The Birth of Jesus

In those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be enrolled. This was the first enrollment, when Quirinius was governor of Syria. And all went to be enrolled, each to his own city. And Joseph also went up from Galilee, from the city of Nazareth, to Judea, to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and lineage of David, to be enrolled with Mary, his betrothed, who was with child. And while they were there, the time came for her to be delivered. And she gave birth to her first-born son and wrapped him in swaddling cloths, and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn.

The Shepherds and the Angels

And in that region there were shepherds out in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. And an angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were filled with fear. And the angel said to them, "Be not afraid; for behold, I bring you good news of a great joy which will come to all the people; for to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. And this will be a sign for you: you will find a babe wrapped in swaddling cloths and lying in a manger."

And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying,

"Glory to God in the highest,
and on earth peace among men with whom he is pleased!"

When the angels went away from them into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let us go over to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has made known to us." And they went with haste, and found Mary and Joseph, and the babe lying in a manger. And when they saw it they made known the saying which had been told them concerning this child; and all who heard it wondered at what the shepherds told them. But Mary kept all these things, pondering them in her heart. And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them.

Merry Christmas!

from
Zion & St. Paul's United Church of Christ



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Link to Website's
Upcoming Events

About Today

Church Season: Christmas is the season of celebration of the birth of Jesus Christ, the Messiah, God's anointed one, who is our King and Saviour, who is the Light of the World. The season of Christmas last 12 days and is from sunset of December 24 through January 5. (January 6 is Epiphany).

Color of the Paraments (cloths on the altar, pulpit, and lecturn):

White - symbolizes Christ as the Light of the World; Emmanuel, God is with us; the presence of Christ, for the Kingdom of God is near. (The colors white, gold, and silver are used interchangeably in the church for paraments).

Colors of the Advent Season (the 4 Sundays before Christmas) - including the Advent Candles:

Blue - symbolizes the hope found in the anticipated coming of Christ

Violet - symbolizes royalty and penitent preparation for Christ our King, who offers forgiveness

Rose/Pink - symbolizes joy, such as the Biblical songs of joy about a child's birth sung by Jesus' mother Mary and John the Baptist's father Zechariah; used on the 3rd Sunday of Advent, as the traditional joyful break for those who are observing "Advent fasting."

The suggested scripture lessons are from the Revised Common Lectionary (RCL), which selects passages throughout the Bible over a three year cycle. The RCL is the most common lectionary used by Christian churches. We are in **Year C**, which emphasizes the Gospel of Luke.

The Bible is in two sections: Old Testament - OT (scripture prior to Christ's birth), located in the first 2/3 of the Bible; and New Testament - NT (about Christ & early church). The first four books of the NT are called the "Gospels," which Christians consider the most central books of the Bible.

Tonight - December 24 - Christmas Eve

Isaiah 9:2-7; Psalm 96; Titus 2:11-14; Luke 2:1-14, (15-20); John 1:1-14

Isaiah

The book of Isaiah (OT) is attributed to three prophets. The first of whom is from where the book gets its name, and is about Isaiah's call to become a prophet and his prophecy that Jerusalem will face God's judgement regarding its immorality in order to be God's Holy City (chaps. 1-39, written 738-688 B.C.), the second is about living in exile in Babylon (chaps. 40-55, written 597-539 B.C.), and the third is about the return from exile to Judah and the rebuilding of the Temple (chaps. 56-66, written 520-515 B.C.). A prophet is one who is divinely appointed by God to lead and instruct.

Psalm 96

This OT hymn is a song of praise to God, who with righteousness is both ruler and judge. Glory is given to God who is above everything else in the universe.

The Letter of Paul to Titus

This epistle (letter) is written to Titus, who occasionally served and traveled with Paul. Paul is writing instructions to Titus, who is in Crete to organize churches recently established by Paul. 1 Timothy, 2 Timothy, and Titus are known as Paul's Pastoral Letters, because they serve to provide guidance for the leadership of newly formed Christian churches. Paul was a Christian, Jew, Pharisee, Roman citizen, and church leader, who had a direct encounter with Jesus Christ on the road to Damascus after Jesus' ascension into heaven. Paul wrote more of the NT than any other person.

The Gospel According to Luke

The Gospel of Luke and the Acts of the Apostles is attributed to Luke "the beloved physician," written around 59-90 A.D. (C.E.). Not having met Jesus personally, Luke undertook the task of "investigating everything carefully from the very first, to write an orderly account" of Jesus Christ, "so that you may know the truth concerning the things about which you have been instructed."

The Gospel According to John

John is the latest of the four Gospels, written around 80-90 A.D. probably in Ephesus, and attributed to John the son of Zebedee, the beloved disciple of Jesus. This Gospel was "written so that you may come to believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and through believing you may have life in his name" (20:31).